

## Parish Plans & Village Design Statements

**A Parish Plan (PP)** sets out the vision for how your local community wants to develop and identifies the actions needed to achieve it. It is holistic and comprehensive in scope and can include everything that is relevant to you, from employment to playgrounds to the design of new buildings and protection of hedges and ponds. You can include any social, environmental or economic issues. It is up to your local community to decide what is important.

**A Village Design Statement (VDS)** is a document describing the qualities and characteristics that your local community values in its village and surroundings. It sets out clear and simple guidance for the design of all development in the village. You cannot use a VDS to stop new development, but you can use it to influence developers and your local council, and to ensure that new buildings respect and reflect local character.

### **Parish Plans & Village Design Statements: Position Statement**

Community Led Planning (Parish Plans and Village Design Statements) encourages community empowerment and the growth of community spirit. Some councils provide financial support for a community development officer to work with parish plan and village design statement groups in some areas. Parish Plans can help communities to access funding for community projects and improvements.

Parish Plans (PP) and Village Design Statements (VDS) can add value to the planning process when used as evidence to influence and steer policy development. Parish Plans will inform the Local Strategic Partnership's Sustainable Community Strategies which in turn influences the Local Development Frameworks (LDF). Parish Plans help to provide the local context for the LDF. Indeed the importance of local knowledge in the planning process is readily acknowledged. Government guidance states (in PPS 12 'Local Spatial Planning') that "Councils should pay close attention to the contents of non statutory parish and community plans as part of their community involvement in the production of the LDF".

Formally adopting a Village Design Statement or a Parish Plan as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) requires a policy to which an SPD could refer. If your council does not have such a suitable adopted policy in its adopted local plan and the new LDF system, which will replace the local plan, requires strict procedural requirements for sustainability appraisal, public consultation and examination. Consequently, it is not possible for Parish Plans and Village Design Statements to form an adopted part of formal planning requirements at this stage. Nevertheless, they remain invaluable documents for the development of the LDF and planning in general and officers have a positive attitude towards them.

Parish Plans and Village Design Statements are useful tools for parishes to use when responding to statutory consultations and when making representations on planning applications.

For more information see: <http://www.planninghelp.org.uk/action/community-tools/village-design-statements>